



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

by

His Excellency Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma
President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

at the

High-Level Event on the Special Needs of Africa

Monday, 22nd September 2008

Speaking Notes for His Excellency the President Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma

Event: High-Level Event on the Special Needs of Africa

Date: September 22nd 2008

Time: 10a.m

Mr. Chairman, ^{THE LEADERS}

Distinguished colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

Permit me to express my sincere gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for organizing these roundtables on Special Needs of Africa. As the Secretary-General rightly asserted in his last report, these forums provide us with an opportunity to review all major commitments made by the international community, including the United Nations, and by African countries, to address the continent's needs, as well as to analyze the state of implementation of commitments made by African States and institutions.

- Needless to state the obvious fact that the African continent is endowed with abundance of human and natural resource potentials, yet for a variety of

internal and exogenous factors the continent's development has been asphyxiated for a considerable period of time. World leaders meeting at the Millennium Summit reiterated the need to address the special needs of Africa to enable it to integrate into the mainstream of the world economy.

- Today, we are taking stock of the status of the implementation of pledges made by international development partners in such key areas as international development assistance, debt relief and debt cancellation, trade liberalization and aid for trade, peace and security, and in particular the role of the United Nations in supporting the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development in attaining internally

agreed development goals (IADGs), including the Millennium Development Goals.

- For fragile and post-conflict countries like mine, many of which are also Least Developed Countries, the challenges in addressing poverty eradication, pandemic diseases, inadequate infrastructure, weak human and technical capacity and the desperate need to improve living standards among others are enormous. Despite efforts by many to implement sound domestic policies, improve macroeconomic management and political governance; progress in achieving the IADGs is among other things, compromised by the current global food crisis, vagaries of climate change, soaring energy prices, the debt crisis and terms of trade.

➤ While we remain cognizant of the fact that the responsibility for Africa's development lies primarily with Africans themselves, we are also mindful of the fact that the current global economic architecture imposes shared responsibilities on partners alike.

The considerable focus of international attention in the last decade on meeting Africa's development needs must be complemented with a firm determination to turn existing commitments into concrete actions in order to:

- i. Provide policy space for African countries to develop their capacities and infrastructure and to strengthen the private sector as a viable partner in development;

- ii. Action to fully implement the Gleneagles' commitment to meet ODA targets as decided;
- iii. Provide coherent support for the programmes drawn up by African leaders through the promotion of a comprehensive and durable solution to the unsustainable external debt burdens of Africa's heavily indebted poor countries;
- iv. Provide assistance to Africa in preventing the scourge of pandemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis by encouraging pharmaceutical companies to make drugs, including antiretroviral drugs, affordable and accessible in Africa;
- v. Supplement the efforts of African countries, individually and collectively, to increase their agricultural productivity in a sustainable way;

On our part we will continue to improve macroeconomic management and political governance with a view to reducing the rates of inflation, ensuring strong fiscal balances and accumulation of reserves in order to provide increased opportunity for enhanced social spending and investment across the continent.

I thank you all for your kind attention.